

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00
USIE-00 MCE-00 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4367
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
USMISSION NATO
SECDEF WASHDC
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 4072

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, SV, NO
SUBJ: SVALBARD QUESTION ENTERS NORWEGIAN ELECTION CAMPAIGN

1. THE RECENT CRASH AND SUBSEQUENT REMOVAL OF A SOVIET
HELICOPTER ON SVALBARD HAS LED TO OPPOSITION CRITICISM
OF THE GON'S EXERCISE OF SOVEREIGNTY IN SVALBARD.

2. ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, SOVIET PERSONNEL REMOVED A
HELICOPTER WHICH HAD MADE AN UNREPORTED CRASH LANDING ON
SVALBARD. (THE SOVIETS DENIED THERE HAD BEEN A CRASH,
REFERRING TO THE INCIDENT AS A "MISTAKEN LANDING.")
THE REMOVAL OF THE AIRCRAFT, PRIOR TO THE ARRIVAL OF A
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NORWEGIAN INSPECTION TEAM AT THE CRASH SITE, HAS
GENERATED BOTH OFFICIAL GON REACTIONS AND SUBSTANTIAL PRESS
DISCUSSION OF SOVIET REGARD OR LACK OF SAME FOR
NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY ON SVALBARD.

3. ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, FOREIGN MINISTER
FRYDENLUND TOOK THE MATTER UP WITH THE SOVIET

AMBASSADOR. A FOREIGN OFFICE SPOKESMAN STATED
SUBSEQUENTLY THAT THE GON WAS DISAPPOINTED IN THE
SOVIET ATTITUDE IN CONNECTION WITH THE ACCIDENT.

4. THE QUESTION ENTERED THE POLITICAL ARENA ON
SEPTEMBER 7 WHEN STORTINGSMAN PAUL THYNESS ACCUSED
THE GON AUTHORITIES OF DAWDLING FOR SO LONG AS TO
ALLOW THE SOVIETS TO REMOVE THE WRECKAGE PRIOR TO THE
ARRIVAL OF NORWEGIAN INSPECTORS. THYNESS SAID THAT
NO NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT CAN TOLERATE SUCH INFRINGEMENT
ON SOVEREIGNTY AND THAT STEPS MUST BE TAKEN TO PREVENT
REPETITIONS.

5. IN A TELEVISED SPEECH THE EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 7,
FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND REJECTED THYNESS' CRITICISM
AND STATED THAT NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES WILL CONTINUE
THEIR INVESTIGATION. FRYDENLUND, IN THE SAME SPEECH,
MADE PUBLIC THE FACT THAT HE HAD TOLD THE SOVIET
AMBASSADOR THAT THE GON REGRETTED THE REMOVAL OF THE
HELICOPTER.

6. THE SEPTEMBER 7 CRITICISM BY THYNESS AND THE FOREIGN
MINISTER'S TELEVISED REPLY THE SAME EVENING HAVE
GENERATED SUBSTANTIAL COVERAGE AND EDITORIAL COMMENT
IN THE SEPTEMBER 7-8 PRESS, WITH NUMEROUS
REFERENCES TO THE SOVIET PRACTICE OF IGNORING
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NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY ON SVALBARD.

7. COMMENT: WITH THE ELECTION FOUR DAYS AWAY AND
THE RULING LABOR PARTY AND ITS OPPOSITION APPARENTLY
DEADLOCKED, THE EMERGENCE OF THE SVALBARD HELICOPTER
CRASH QUESTION MAY PROVIDE FURTHER PUBLIC EXCHANGES
CONCERNING GON EXERCISE OF SOVEREIGNTY ON SVALBARD
AND ON SOVIET-NORWEGIAN RELATIONS IN GENERAL.
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